

**Testimony of Matthew Williams
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Public Hearing on the Governor's Budget**

I would like to thank you all for this opportunity to speak in front of you this evening. I became a father at the age of 20. At the age of 22, I took on the privilege of raising two beautiful girls on my own and then 9yrs ago my wife and I had our last child.

Yet, with 16yrs of being a dad I still don't know what I am doing half the time and have come to learn that that's o.k..

24/7 dad at Madonna Place in Norwich has been a huge help to me personally. Single mothers have quite a large system of help and resources. People just don't think fathers, single or otherwise need any help. It is hard for the majority of men to admit to themselves let alone others that we need help. Without these types of courses single fathers no, father in general will not have the help we so desperately need.

The knowledge I have gained from this course and it's instructors has been priceless. I will be forever grateful for this program and pray others can gain the knowledge I have received for themselves.

In short, if fathers don't have these classes, programs or plain out caring people like in the 24/7 dad program, the ones that do admit they need help will never get it. We fathers are more than just financial supporters for our families, we teach and learn, we act like fools without hesitation for our children.

We need to know there is help out there for us, from the simplest little problem to a major drama. These classes show us different ways of approaching allsorts of situations. So please don't do away with one of the few resources we fathers have.

Like I said previously, I have been a father for 16yrs and I am still learning. Thank you for your time.....

Matthew Williams
Responsible Father-Franklin, CT